

Cedric the Snail

Jacqui Kelly, England

My name is Jacqui Kelly and I have been sugar crafting for six years as a hobby. Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, I moved to England in 2004 and have spent the last 12 years working as an Event Manager at the prestigious Royal Albert Hall in London, arranging rock & pop concerts, the BBC Classical Music Proms seasons and the annual visit of Cirque du Soliel to the venue- just a few of the 360 events each year. In August I gave up this wonderful job to concentrate full time on my sugar work and opened Cake Revolution.

Cedric Snail was created in a hurry, as my original plans for a grand piece for my Cake International 2012 entry at the NEC in Birmingham, England were not possible as I broke several ribs and was unable to roll out big pieces of work, so a small decorative exhibit evolved in its place – Cedric.

I had created Cedric two years earlier as a house warming cake for a friend, where I had used a chocolate roll for the body and a giant toffee muffin for his shell. This time around I hand carved a polystyrene dummy for his structure and all the rest of the work is done in sugar paste (fondant) and modelling paste created by adding CMC/tylose powder to the sugar paste (fondant). I know that in the US you would perhaps use modelling chocolate but we don't use that much over here in the UK and I have not experimented enough to know its qualities.

After coating the body in white paste and adding in the belly detail I cover the back with a cobble stone textured section of fondant as this was as close as I could find to snail skin texture, and then frilled around the edges to give a sense of movement. His shell was built up with a thick roll of paste and then coated in sugar paste (fondant) and scored using a Dresden tool. Once dry I built up several layers of colour using my air brush and then scratching back to get the colour layer underneath showing as well.

The little red flyers even in the UK are a well known childhood memory and it seemed apt to move all Cedric's extra belongings in them. Each was created from red modelling paste, cut into panels and left to dry for 48 hours, "glued" them together with red royal icing and again left for 24 hours – (don't play! they always break if you start to fill them too quickly, patience is not a virtue I excel at but it really does pay dividends).



All his little belongings were created with a wave at steampunking, the lovely old suitcases and cuckoo clock, etc. Think of all those wonderful moulds or actually sections of moulds that you already have, look at each component in a mould and see what else you may be able to create from it.

My cuckoo clock for example is made from two upside down heart moulds glued back to back, and the large suitcase textured using a crocodile skin texture mat I bought on my first visit to the ICES convention in Charlotte, where us "out of towners" saw so many new techniques, wonderful display cakes and did great shopping in the traders hall!

The boards that he sits on were cut using a jigsaw to a more interesting shape (not everything has to be square or round) and they are textured using embossed wallpaper from my local hardware depot. The free samples are great but only use them once and don't use the bit right at the end of the roll (sticky fingers and dust). Think food safe – but they do create wonderful patterns. I rub evenly with the heel of my hand although you can roll over them with a big rolling pin. Lift a corner to check if you are happy with the depth of texture before lifting off completely. And then go to town with your air brush (or dust and a big brush if you prefer).

One of the key things for me is knowing when to stop... less is sometimes more. Do snails really need bedroom slippers? I did make a lovely pair for him!

I was thrilled when he took GOLD MEDAL in his decorative exhibit class at Cake International and received lots of admiring glances and emails – which I shall of course forward to his new address. 🐌